

REMARKS

Summary of Claimed Invention

The method of the present invention provides a mechanism for the granting of professional continuing education credits in exchange for review of educational content without resorting to conventional testing requirements. The present invention segments educational data into educational units forming substantially complete content and presents it as a series of self-contained topics to a user. The user must log in to begin review and log out upon completion. A minimum and maximum time parameter in which a user is to review the content in exchange for continuing educational credits is provided. The parameters combine with the smaller topics to require the user to actually be present at a remote terminal in order to compile substantial continuing educational credits. The minimum time parameter prevents a user from logging in and then immediately logging out in order to gain credit. The maximum time parameter prevents a user from logging in and wandering off to do something else when the user is supposed to be reviewing the content since exceeding the time parameter disqualifies the user from gaining continuing education credits. Conventionally a test from the continuing education authority or on its behalf had been required in order to ensure review of the material. The **present invention avoids the need for a test on the educational content** since applicants review the data in the smaller segments since they are required to be near the computer during the review window in order to satisfy the time parameters.

The present invention additionally allows the tying of advertisement units to the educational units. Since the typical user will require multiple educational units in order to amass sufficient continuing education credit, the advertisers are provided with multiple opportunities to present advertisements to the users. The advertisements may be sequential or thematic to take advantage of the captive audience over a certain time period.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

Pending Claims 8-14, 16-17 and 19-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being unpatentable as anticipated by Lotvin et al., (U.S. Patent No. 5, 907, 831, hereafter Lotvin '831). This rejection is respectfully traversed in view of the following comments and the amendments noted above.

Summary of Lotvin'831

Lotvin '831 discloses an educational system whereby parents arrange with third party providers to provide children with access to educational and cultural information. The educational and cultural data is presented to the child who reviews and responds to the data. Upon completion of the review of the data, the child is rewarded with points from the third party provider. The points are funded by the parents through payments to the third party provider and may be redeemed to purchase a variety of items. There is no minimum time parameter associated with the review of data. The terms parent and child are defined broadly so as to include situations where a company presenting information to an employee is included. In all cases, the points/rewards are funded by entities (parents/companies, etc.) associated with the user (child/employee, etc) reviewing the content. No mention is made of granting continuing education credit in exchange for the content review.

Pending Claims 8-14, 16-17 and 19-20, are not Anticipated by Lotvin '831 because Claimed Limitations are not Disclosed by the Cited Reference

Former independent claim 8 has been amended and re-presented in dependent form. Claim 8 is now dependent upon currently amended claim 7 and includes the limitation of conferring educational credit on a user for reviewing the educational content within a minimum and maximum time period. The limitation also requires that the review of the educational content not include an examination of the user based on the content. Lotvin '831 does not include the educational credit element, the minimum time period element or the negative limitation of not testing the user on the content prior to conferring educational credit. Accordingly, Lotvin '831 does not include all of the claimed characteristics of re-presented and amended claim 8. Similarly claims 9-13 are

dependent upon claim 8 and include all of its limitations and those of claim 7. Lotvin '831 therefore does not anticipate claims 9-13.

Claim 14 has been amended to add the additional elements that the review of the educational content by the user is subject to a minimum and maximum time parameter, that the review does not include an examination based on the content, and that continuing education credit is conferred on the user. Claims 16, 17 and 19 are dependent upon claim 14 and include all of its limitations. As noted previously, Lotvin '831 does not include these elements. Lotvin '831 therefore does not anticipate claims 14, 16-17 and 19.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Pending claims 1, 3-7 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Lotvin '831 in view of Sonnenfeld '049.

Summary of Sonnenfeld '049

Sonnenfeld '049 discloses a computer network based **testing system**. Users are tested over a network and subject to minimum and maximum time restraints as part of the testing process. The test data is modular and may comprise multiple units put together in different manners depending upon the particular test.

Pending Claims 1, 3-7 and 18 are not Rendered Obvious by Lotvin '831 in View of Sonnenfeld '049

Independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the claimed elements of previously dependent (and now canceled) claim 2 which subjected the user review of educational content to a minimum and maximum time period . Claim 1 has also been amended to include the element of the user receiving continuing educational credit for reviewing the educational content and the limitation that the review does not include an examination based on the content. Neither Sonnenfeld '049 nor Lotvin '831 disclose the

conferring of continuing education credit on a user, nor does either disclose a minimum time period for review during a non-testing review of educational content. Additionally, because Sonnenfeld '049 is directed specifically to a testing environment whereas the present invention is specifically directed away from testing, there would be no motivation to combine any elements of Sonnenfeld '049 with those of Lotvin '831. Also, the conferring of continuing education credits which are granted by professional organizations (as in the present invention) is in no way the equivalent of the granting of points which are redeemable to purchase items, the points being subsidized by a party related to the user(as in Lotvin '831). Since limitations of claim 1 of the present invention are lacking from the combination of Lotvin '831 and Sonnenfeld '049, the combination does not render claim 1 obvious. Claims 3-6 are dependant upon claim 1 and include all of its limitations. For the same reasons discussed regarding claim 1, claims 3 and 6 are also not rendered obvious by the combination of Sonnenfeld '049 and Lotvin '831.

Claim 7 is an independent claim and includes elements of the conferring of educational credit to a user in exchange for the user reviewing content between a maximum and minimum time period. Claim 7 also includes the negative limitation that the viewing of the content does not include an examination of the user based on the content. As previously discussed, neither Sonnenfeld '049 and Lotvin '831 disclose the conferring of continuing education credit or the use of a minimum time parameter associated with a non-testing review of educational content. Since neither Sonnenfeld '049 nor Lotvin '831, contain the missing elements separately, the combination together does not render claim 7 obvious.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112

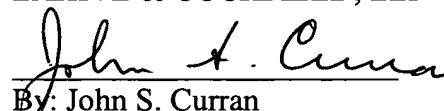
Independent claim 20 was rejected as being indefinite. Claim 20 has been amended to change it into an independent computer readable medium claim. The amended claim includes the elements that the review of the educational content by the user is subject to a minimum and maximum time period, that the review does not include an examination based on the content, and that continuing education credit is conferred on the user. As discussed above, Lotvin '831 does not include these elements. Also as discussed above, Sonnenfeld '049 also does not include these elements.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance. Applicants courteously solicit allowance of the claims in the form of a Notice of Allowance. Should there be any outstanding issues of patentability following the entry of this response, a telephone interview is respectfully requested to resolve such issues.

Please charge any shortage or credit any overpayment of fees to our Deposit Account No. 12-0080. In the event that a petition for an extension of time is required to be submitted herewith, and the requisite petition does not accompany this response, the undersigned hereby petitions under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) for an extension of time for as many months as are required to render this submission timely. Any fee due, other than the issue fee, is authorized to be charged to the aforementioned Deposit Account. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Respectfully submitted,
LAHIVE & COCKFIELD, LLP


By: John S. Curran

Reg. No. 50, 445
Attorney for Applicants
28 State Street
Boston, MA 02109-1784
Tel: (617) 227-7400
Fax: (617) 742-4214

Date: May 20, 2003